(b) if so, the outcome of the talks, particularly about division of the water of Ganga, Tista, Monu, Khowai, Awadhkumari, Dharala, Muhari and Gomati rivers; and

(c) the details of the projects/dams/canals proposed to be built on those eight rivers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. the 7th meeting of Joint Committee of Experts (JCE) at Secretary level on sharing of waters of Teesta and other com mon rivers was held at Dhaka on 14th and 15th September, 2004. Discussion were mainly held on sharing of Teesta waters. During the meeting, it was decided that the Joint Technical Groups (JTG) which had been constituted earlier during the 6th meeting of JCE, may hold meetings again and make efforts to further narrow the gaps on the pending issues. Accordingly the 3rd meeting of JTG was held at New Delhi on 9th and 10th November, 2004 wherein it was decided to continue the discussions further.

No discussions took place on other common rivers namely Manu, Khowai, Dudhkumar, Dharala, Muhuri and Gumti. River Ganga is not covered under the talks by JCE as there already exists a Treaty on sharing of Ganga/Ganges Waters which was entered between India and Bangladesh in December, 1996.

(c) Does not arise.

Interlinking of Rivers

569. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any initiative has been taken on the programmes of interlinking of rivers in the greater interest of the country; and

(b) if so, the status of the progress?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) yes, Sir. Two proposals for interlinking of rivers which have attracted considerable attention were given by Dr. K. L. Rao in 1972 and Captain Dastur in 1977. These proposals were not found Jechno-economicaily viable. Later, the Ministry of Water Resoucees (MOWR) (erstwhile Ministry of Irrigation) and Central Water Commition (CWC) formulated a National Perspective Plan

(NPP) for Water Resources Development in 1980 envisaging interbasin transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit basins/areas which comprises of two components namely Himalayan Rivers Development Component and Peninsular Rivers Development Component The Peninsular Rivers Development Component of NPP was discussed in the Conference of the State Irrigation Ministers held during 1980 and 1981 and were welcomed by all, Seeing the merit of the concept, National Water Development Agency (NWDA) was set up under the MOWR in 1982 for carrying out various technical studies to establish the feasibility of the proposals of NPP and to give concrete shape to it. Based on various studies conducted, NWDA has identified 30 links for preparing Feasibility Reports (FRs.) NWDA has completed feasibility reports for thirteen links. With a view to bringing about a consensus among the states and provide guidance on norms of appraisal of individual projects and modalities for project funding etc., the Central Govt, and set up a Task Force in December, 2002. The Task Force had submitted the required Action Plans to the Government. The National Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Government indicates that it will make a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of linking the rivers of the country starting with the sourthern rivers and this assessment will be done in a fully consultative manner. After the comprehensive assessment, it has been decided that river linking programme be continued with a focus on peninsular rivers.

Pending irrigation schemes

†570. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that hydro-electric and irrigation schemes proposed by the States are under consideration since long in the absence of consensus between his Ministry of Environment and Forests;

(b) if so, the details of these schemes, State-wise; and

(c) by when these schemes are linkely to be sanctioned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The techno-economic appraisal of hydro-electric projects is dealt in the Central Electricity Authority, Ministry of Power. There is no requirement of consensus between Ministry of Water Resoruces and Ministry of

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.